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Compendium of basic terminology in governance and public administration

Definition of basic concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration

Note by the Secretariat*

Summary

At its fourth session, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration recognized that there are some fundamental concepts and terminologies of governance and public administration that need to be defined in order that there can be a common understanding of them throughout the United Nations system. It is acknowledged that often these concepts and terminologies are not applied in a uniform way. The discussions of the Committee on this subject will be the beginning of a participatory process in identifying and defining the major concepts and terminologies at the core of governance and public administration. The terminologies that are presented in the present paper are not exhaustive; developed through a brief desk research, they are intended to provide an initial springboard for the Committee to initiate discussions on these and related terms. Following the Committee's comments and guidance, the research will be extended to expand the inventory and the definitions of the concepts and terminologies in governance and public administration.

* The submission of the present report was delayed owing to the late receipt of input from the external consultant.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fourth session, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration recognized that there are some fundamental concepts and terminologies of governance and public administration that need to be defined in order to provide a common understanding of them for the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. These concepts and terminologies are not static and do not apply in a uniform way in all places and cultures. The Committee agreed that a participatory process is called for to identify the main principles constituting the content of governance and public administration. Accordingly, and as a basis for its discussions, the Committee decided to focus on the definition of basic concepts and terminologies relating to governance and public administration, providing an in-depth assessment of such concepts, how they have evolved and how they are used and applied. The Committee felt that definition of these concepts and related terminologies would greatly benefit the discussion in governmental processes as well as in the work of practitioners. As an initial step in making an inventory of these terminologies and their various definitions by different actors, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has put together the present report, containing some of the basic terminologies involved in its governance and public administration programme. The paper presents a limited inventory and listing of definitions of concepts and terminologies. Its main purpose is to serve as a point of departure for the Committee to discuss and advise which concepts and terminologies to define and how they should be defined.

II. Governance and public administration

2. The term governance has gained great usage in contemporary public administration. Many theorists in the field believe that the term governance is an organizing concept that guides administrators as administrative practices shift from the bureaucratic State to what is called the "hollow State" or what Osborne and Gaebler (1993)[1] call "third-party government". According to Frederickson and Smith,[2] "Governance refers to the lateral and inter-institutional relations in administration in the context of the decline of sovereignty, the decreasing importance of jurisdictional borders and a general institutional fragmentation". Frederickson and Smith assert further that, with more emphasis on governance, "the administrative state is now less bureaucratic, less hierarchical and less reliant on central authority to mandate action. Accountability for conducting the public's business is increasingly about performance rather than discharging a specific policy goal with the confines of the law".

3. The use of the terms governance and public administration gained unprecedented momentum in both their quest and usage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, as the twenty-first century gets under way, there does not seem to be a consensus as to what they mean. In a highly dynamic environment, politically, socially, economically, and culturally, these terms mean different things in different contexts.

A. Governance

4. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the term governance gained the prominent attention of donor agencies, social scientists, philanthropists and civil society. This popularity stems from the fact that it can be applied to a wide range of issues, relationships and institutions involved in the process of managing public and private affairs. The term governance enlarges and better illustrates what Governments should be focusing on. In addition, at the end of the cold war, the usage of the term was revitalized as donor agencies, notably the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Western countries urged the countries of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the countries of the developing world to undertake political, economic and administrative reforms and to practice good governance. The conceptualization of the term does not, however, seem to have been consistent, and it has generated various definitions and meanings, as shown below.

5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 policy paper,[3] defined governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences". This definition was endorsed by the Secretary-General's inter-agency sub-task force to promote integrated responses to United Nations conferences and summits. Over the past 10 years, the number of country level programmes on governance supported by the United Nations system has expanded considerably.

6. In 1993, the World Bank defined governance as the method through which power is exercised in the management of a country's political, economic and social resources for development.[4] While the World Bank has focused on stabilization and State reforms that overwhelmingly focused on civil service retrenchment and privatization for a long period, the early 1990s saw a change of focus. The Bank came to realize that most of the crises in developing countries are of a governance nature. Hence, the contemporary adjustment package emphasizes governance issues such as transparency, accountability and judicial reform. In this context, the Bank has introduced a new way of looking at governance; good governance.

7. According to Jon Pierre,[5] "governance refers to sustaining coordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with different purposes and objectives". Such actors may include political actors and institutions, interest groups, civil society, non-governmental and transnational organizations. This definition illustrates that while the government of a traditional State has to cope with internal challenges and external challenges from the above actors, some of the functions previously the preserve of government may be taken over some of the same parties. This definition gives credence to the assertion made earlier that governance is broader than government.

8. While Pierre's definition of governance is society-centric, Peters and Pierre[6] offer a definition of the term that is more State-centric. Even as they concede that "governance relates to changing relationships between State and society and a growing reliance on less coercive policy instruments" they assert that "the State is still the centre of considerable political power". They perceive governance as "processes in which the State plays a leading role, making priorities and defining

objectives". This is in line with the notion of the role of the State as that of "steering" society and the economy.

9. Hirst[7] offers a more general definition of the term. He asserts that "governance can be generally defined as the means by which an activity or ensemble of activities is controlled or directed, such that it delivers an acceptable range of outcomes according to some established standard".

10. Canada's Institute of Governance (2002)[8] offers another general definition, asserting that "Governance is the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine whom they involve and how they render account".

B. Good governance

11. According to the World Bank, good governance entails sound public sector management (efficiency, effectiveness and economy), accountability, exchange and free flow of information (transparency), and a legal framework for development (justice, respect for human rights and liberties).

12. In seeming agreement with the World Bank, the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (now the Department for International Development), defines good governance by focusing on four major components namely legitimacy (government should have the consent of the governed); accountability (ensuring transparency, being answerable for actions and media freedom); competence (effective policymaking, implementation and service delivery); and respect for law and protection of human rights.[9]

13. According to Surendra Munshi,[10] good governance "signifies a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice".

14. A more succinct definition of good governance is offered by Hirst[7] who propounds that it "means creating an effective political framework conducive to private economic action: stable regimes, the rule of law, efficient State administration adapted to the roles that Governments can actually perform and a strong civil society independent of the State".

C. Global governance

15. Thomas G. Weiss, director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York,[11] defines "global governance" as "collective efforts to identify, understand or address worldwide problems that go beyond the capacity of individual States to solve". He asserts that global governance may be defined as "the complex of formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships, and processes between and among States, markets, citizens and organizations, both inter- and non-governmental, through which collective interests on the global plane are articulated, rights and obligations are established, and differences are mediated".[12]

16. In 2005, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi[13] defined global governance as "the activities and processes of government and governing located at several different government levels; that is local, national, regional and global".

17. The term governance has numerous concepts and principles associated with it. Below is an overview of those most commonly used.

III. Public administration

18. Public administration has many definitions. According to some authors, public administration is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and programmes as well as the behaviour of officials (usually non-elected) formally responsible for their conduct.

19. Other specialists in the field define public administration as all processes, organizations and individuals (the latter acting in official positions and roles) associated with carrying out laws and other rules adopted or issued by legislatures, executives and courts.

20. Other parties assert that public administration is the use of managerial, political and legal theories and processes to fulfil legislative, executive and judicial mandates for the provision of government regulatory and service functions.

21. According to UNDP, public administration has two closely related meanings:

(a) The aggregate machinery (policies, rules, procedures, systems, organizational structures, personnel and so forth) funded by the State budget and in charge of the management and direction of the affairs of the executive government, and its interaction with other stakeholders in the State, society and external environment;

(b) The management and implementation of the whole set of government activities dealing with the implementation of laws, regulations and decisions of the Government and the management related to the provision of public services.[14]

IV. New public management

22. New public management is a global public management reform movement that redefines the relationship between Government and society that originated in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Spurred by citizen dissatisfaction with government performance, endemic fiscal problems and seemingly successfu' restructuring in the private arena, calls for public sector reform and reinventing Government became rampant.

23. According to Osborne and Gaebler (1993),[1] new public management calls on Government to focus on achieving results rather than primarily conforming to procedures and to adopt market-like competition, innovations and entrepreneurial strategies. In order to be market-like, Government and public administration generally is called upon to be customer-driven and to rely on market-based mechanisms to deliver public services.

24. According to some authors, new public management calls on public administration to change its culture and be flexible, innovative, problem-solving,

entrepreneurial and enterprising, as opposed to rule-bound, process-oriented and focused on inputs rather then results.

25. The contention expressed by supporters of new public management that public administrators should be conceived as entrepreneurs, seeking opportunities to create private partnerships and serve customers has come under criticism. Denhardt and Denhardt[15] argue that "this perspective of the public administrator is narrow and is poorly suited to achieve democratic principles such as fairness, justice, participation and the articulation of shared interest".

A. Public sector governance

26. Public sector governance has been defined as regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable the provision of publicly supported goods and services. In this definition, constitutional institutions are linked to the realities of policymaking and public management.

B. Democracy

27. The UNDP *Human Development Report, 2002* stated that "For politics and political institutions to promote human development and safeguard the freedom and dignity of all people, democracy must widen and deepen". "Democracy", as defined in Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org), "in its ideal sense is the notion that 'the people' should have control of the government ruling over them. This ideal is pursued by implementing a system of voting such that the majority of people rule, either directly or indirectly through elected representatives. Democracies may be 'liberal', where fundamental rights of individuals in the minority are protected by law, or they may be 'illiberal' where they are not. Democracy is often implemented as a form of government in which policy is decided by the preference of the real majority (as opposed to a partial or relative majority of the demos/citizens) in a decision-making process, usually elections or referenda, open to all".

28. According to Elgstrom and Hyden,[16] democracy is system of government with the following attributes:

(a) There are institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies at the national level and there are institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive (competition);

(b) There exists inclusive suffrage and a right of participation in the selection of national leaders and policies (inclusiveness/participation).

29. Larry Diamond[17] uses the maximalist definition of democracy as encompassing "not only a civilian, constitutional, multiparty regime, with regular, free and fair elections and universal suffrage, but organizational and informational pluralism; extensive civil liberties (freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations); effective power for elected officials; and functional autonomy for legislative, executive and judicial organs of government.

C. Democratic governance

30. Some consider democracy as a set of values and governance as a process of interaction among three sets of actors, from the State, civil society and the private sector, which implies governance based on fundamental and universally accepted principles, including: participation, accountability, transparency, rule of law, separation of powers, access, subsidiarity, equality and freedom of the press.

D. Public sector reform

31. According to other sources, public sector reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better. Structural change may include merging or splitting public sector organizations while process change may include redesigning systems, setting quality standards and focusing on capacity-building.

E. Civil service reform

32. Civil service reform, which implies developing the capacity of the civil service to fulfil its mandate, defined to include issues of recruitment and promotion, pay, number of employees, performance appraisal and related matters, still constitutes the main part of national programmes for public administration reform. Civil service reform has historically focused on the need to contain the costs of public sector employment through retrenchment and restructuring, but has broadened towards focusing on the longer-term goal of creating a government workforce of the right size, with the appropriate mix of skills, and the right motivation, professional ethos, client focus and accountability.[14]

V. Capacity development

33. Capacity development is the process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. It needs to be addressed at three inter-related levels: individual, institutional and societal. "Specifically, capacity-building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environment potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned".[18]

34. UNDP recognizes that capacity-building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders participate (ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and water user groups, professional associations, academics and others). In 1991, UNDP and the International Institute for Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering organized a symposium entitled "A strategy for water sector capacity-building" in Delft, the Netherlands, during which delegates from developing countries and supporting institutes defined capacity-building as: (a) the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks;

(b) institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular); and (c) human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems.

35. At the individual level, capacity-building involves establishing the conditions under which public servants are able to embark on a continuous process of learning and adapting to change — building on existing knowledge and skills and enhancing and using them in new directions. This requires a new approach to human resources management and also points to the importance of knowledge management as the new vehicle for increased learning. At the institutional level, a similar approach needs to be applied. Rather than creating new institutions, often based on foreign blueprints, support should focus on the modernization of their machinery, with a priority on systems and processes. In this process, capacity development for policy support, organizational effectiveness and revenue and expenditure management is crucial. Finally, capacity development at the societal level is required to support the paradigm of a more interactive public administration that learns equally from its actions and from the feedback it receives from the population at large. In order for public administration to be seen as a responsive and accountable service provider, whose performance needs to be monitored, societal change is required.[3]

VI. Decentralization

36. In governance and public administration, decentralization is commonly regarded as a process through which powers, functions, responsibilities and resources are transferred from central to local governments and/or to other decentralized entities. In practical terms, decentralization is a process of striking a balance between the claims of the periphery and the demands of the centre. Decentralization, when appropriately structured, provides an arrangement through which critical issues (such as those of national unity and indivisibility, how to safeguard national interests and ensure coordinated and even development, equity in the distribution of resources, diversity, and local autonomy) can be reconciled.[19] Many countries have made efforts to decentralize their political and administrative systems. These efforts have met with varying degrees of vigour and success because each country responds in its own way to unprecedented changes and challenges in its administrative and political performance.

37. Decentralization is a broad concept that can be both a means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services as well as a way to promote the broader values of pluralistic, participatory democracy. It implies transfer of political, financial, administrative and legal authority from central government to regional/subnational and local governments. Different forms of decentralization can be distinguished based on the extent to which power and authority is being transferred and/or the type of authority being transferred or devolved, for example: deconcentration from central government departments to local offices; delegation to semi-autonomous organizations; devolution to local governments; or transfer to non-governmental organizations.[20]

38. In the view of one specialist in the field, decentralization refers to the restructuring or reorganization of governmental authority in such a manner as to establish a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus

increasing overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance while increasing the authority and capacities of subnational levels.

VII. Civil society

39. Civil society is a vital component of governance and decentralization, the one component that is supposed to vigilantly hold those in power accountable and to promote democracy. Simply put, civil society is that sphere of action independent of the State, within the realm of private sector and civil organizations, capable of stimulating resistance to and change in undemocratic regimes.

40. Patrick Chabal,[21] in reference to African civil society, defines it as "a vast ensemble of constantly changing groups and individuals (who have) acquired some consciousness of their externality and opposition to the state". It should be noted, however, that while civil society is an agent of change, it does not necessarily have to be in opposition to the State, especially if the latter practices good governance.

41. According to Diamond,[17] civil society is the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the State and bound by a legal or shared set of rules.

42. Denhardt and Denhardt[15] put it succinctly when they asserted that "civil society is one place where citizens can engage one another in the kind of personal dialogue and deliberation that is the essence not only of community building, but of democracy itself".

Civil society organizations

43. Civil society organizations include non-governmental organizations, professional and private sector associations and trade unions. They also include families, churches, neighbourhood groups, social groups and work groups. Indeed the capability and strength of civil society depends on the operation of such organizations. Civil society organizations take on various roles and responsibilities, among them supplementing the functions normally performed by political parties such as interest articulation and popular mobilization, recruiting and training new political leaders and disseminating information and holding Governments accountable.

44. In a recent publication,[22] civil society organizations are seen as capable of performing various functions, among them, generating a democratic transition by altering the balance of power between society and State, organizing opposition against the State, articulating interests of groups in society, recruiting leaders who are prepared to overthrow the non-democratic regime and providing information, which may inspire citizens to protest against the regime.

VIII. Globalization

45. According to one author, globalization is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge and, to a lesser extent, people across

borders. As such, globalization, when seen as the increasing integration of the world economy, makes undemocratic tendencies and poor government performance great liabilities to any country.

46. According to Munshi and Abraham[10] "In its positive sense, globalization is evident in the integration of global markets, rapid advances in communication technology and the spread of what has been called 'mass culture'".

47. Another specialist in the field argues that globalization implies that many chains of political, economic and social activity are worldwide in scope, asserting further that it also implies that there is an intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between States and societies. In this view, globalization generates a stretching of social relations in and through new dimensions of activity, technological, organizational, administrative and legal, among others, and the chronic intensification of patterns of interconnectedness mediated by such phenomena as modern communications networks and new information technology.

IX. Accountability

48. Accountability is one of the prerequisites of democratic or good governance. It entails holding elected or appointed officials charged with a public mandate responsible and answerable for their actions, activities and decisions. It is the role of civil society to hold those in public office accountable. Accountability seeks to know who is liable for what and what kind of conduct is illegal. Accountability may be categorized into four broad types:

(a) Accountability is associated with the idea of answerability, based on the premise that individual identity is determined by one's position in a structured relationship;

(b) Liability, a second form of accountability, sees individual identity rooted in more-formalized expectations developed through rules, contracts, legislation and similar relationships based on legalistic standing;

(c) Accountability is associated with role-based expectations. Such roles foster blameworthiness as a basis for shaping and directing one's behaviour;

(d) Accountability expectations are derived from an individual's perceived status in a community where attributions come into play.

Transparency and accountability

49. Transparency and accountability are interrelated and mutually reinforcing concepts. Without *transparency*, that is, unfettered access to timely and reliable information on decisions and performance, it would be difficult to call public sector entities to account. Unless there is *accountability*, that is, mechanisms to report on the usage of public resources and consequences for failing to meet stated performance objectives, transparency would be of little value. The existence of both conditions is a prerequisite to effective, efficient and equitable management in public institutions.[23]

X. Ethics

Ethics: the standards which guide the behaviour and actions of personnel in public institutions and which may be referred to as moral laws (see Charter for the Public Service in Africa).

Corruption: Corruption may be defined as conduct that amounts to: influencing the decision-making process of a public officer or authority, or influence peddling; dishonesty or breach of trust by a public officer in the exercise of his duty; insider dealing/conflicts of interests; [and] influence peddling by the use of fraudulent means such as bribery, blackmail, which includes the use of election fraud. It is a form of behaviour that deviates from ethics, morality, tradition, law and civic virtue (see Namibia's Zero Tolerance for Corruption Campaign: http://www.anticorruption.info/corr_def.htm).

50. Ethics can be looked at as an internal check, a sense of personal responsibility and accountability that applies external checks on public administration. This concept has been variedly defined, with some experts asserting that the term involves thinking systematically about morals and conduct and making judgements about right and wrong. In this view, ethics should guide the actions and performance of public servants and values like morality should help them delineate right actions from wrong. Similarly, Denhardt and Denhardt[15] assert that it is the "process by which we clarify right from wrong and act on what we take to be right". In this view, by clarifying what is right, one opts for moral action and upholds moral standards. Another expert believes that ethics in public service is about the practical application of moral standards in government. All ethical behaviour is concerned with how an individual feels he or she ought to behave. It is about values and the application of those values in any given context. However, by placing emphasis on the individual and the individual's value perceptions, there is a danger of generating ethical relativism, which ultimately results in ethical ambiguity.

51. Another author working in the field asserts that ethics is a set of standards that guide our conduct and help us when we face decisions that involve moral choices. He observes that while ethics reflect personal and professional standards, it is values that give meaning to the term ethics and it is values that define what we view as right. Thus, ethics and values are connected and are very normative in nature, they indicate how one should behave in a given situation or under a particular set of circumstances.

Integrity

52. UNDP asserts that integrity is a key element that completes the notion of accountability and transparency. It is defined as incorruptibility, an unimpaired condition or soundness and is synonymous to honesty. In terms of public service, integrity requires that holders of public office should not place themselves under financial or other obligations to outside individuals or organizations that may influence them in the performance of their official duties. Integrity is not an end in itself rather than a path leading to the effective delivery of the services and performance of functions, which the public is entitled to receive from those who govern them.

(a) **Social accountability**: an institutional arrangement that emphasizes wider accountability framework for public policies and programmes. It involves

planning, tracking and reporting in a transparent manner beyond the constituency of a particular institution;

(b) **Participatory and pro-poor budgeting**: is considered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Division for Public Administration and Development Management as a budgetary process that mainstreams citizens more directly in the: budget formulation; budget implementation; budget monitoring; and budget control and associated with or enabled by the following:

(i) Enabling environment for participatory budgeting, which is a set of interrelated conditions, including legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political and cultural aspects, which facilitates civil society organizations and other development actors to engage in budget processes in a sustained and effective manner;

(ii) Pro-poor budgeting, which is a process that focuses budget priority setting, budget allocation and budget implementation on achieving pro-poor objectives, such as goals in the health, education, water and sanitation sectors. It is a process that involves legislative and executive branches, civil society, the business community and the media. Pro-poor budgeting can be a bottom-up approach (when the initiative starts from the community) or top-down approach (when the initiative starts from the legislative/executive);

(iii) Gender budgeting, which is a process that focuses in setting budget priorities and allocation based on well-designed gender policies and gender-related issues;

(iv) Human rights budgeting, which is a process that focuses in setting budget priorities and allocation on policies related to human rights issues. It can be a legislative change/improvement, an institutional change/improvement, or a policy-setting change/improvement, involving increased consultations with interest groups;

(c) **Pro-poor policymaking**: is a process that focuses the policy design and implementation on achieving pro-poor objectives (the last of which are defined in the Millennium Development Goals);

(d) **Alternative budgets**: are budgets that change substantially from the original draft of executive branch. Preparation of alternative budgets takes place outside the executive branch, which in almost any national legislation is responsible for formulating the budget. Alternative budgets can be prepared, inter alia, by the legislative branch (the case of the United States Congress), in which case it is called a legislative alternative budget, or by civil society;

(e) **Engaged governance**: is a governance strategy that links citizens more directly into the decision-making process of the State in order to enable them to influence the public policies and programmes in a manner that impacts more positively on their social and economic lives;

(f) **Best practices**: based on the report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements to the General Assembly (A/50/37), "best practices": (a) should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on improving the living environment of people; (b) should be based on partnerships between the public, private and civil society sectors; and (c) should be socially,

economically and environmentally sustainable. The General Assembly, based on the UN-Habitat agenda, further recommended that best practices be used as one of the two key instruments for assessing progress in achieving its twin goals of shelter for all and sustainable urbanization (see General Assembly resolution S-25/2). In the case of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, focusing on "best practices" means accumulating and applying knowledge about what works and what does not work in different situations and contexts. It is both the lessons learned and the continuing process of learning, feedback, reflection and analysis;

(g) **Innovation**: innovation is a creative idea and implementation, which is different from invention. It is the act of conceiving and implementing a new way of achieving a result and/or performing work. An innovation may involve the incorporation of new elements, a new combination of existing elements or a significant change or a departure from traditional ways of doing things. It refers to new products, new policies and programmes, new approaches and new processes. Public sector management innovation may also be defined as the development of new policy designs and new standard operating procedures by public organizations to address public policy problems. Thus, an innovation in public administration may be an effective, creative and unique answer to new problems or a new answer to old problems;

(h) **E-government**: the concept of e-government espouses two aspects: (a) e-readiness, which is the generic capacity or aptitude of the public sector to use information and communications technology (ICT) for encapsulating in public services and deploying to the public high quality information (explicit knowledge) and effective communication tools that support human development; and (b) e-participation, which refers to the willingness, on the part of government, to use ICT to provide high quality information (explicit knowledge) and effective communication tools for the specific purpose of empowering people to participate in consultations and decision-making, both in their capacity as consumers of public services and as citizens;

(i) **E-democracy**: is the utilization of electronic communications technologies, such as the Internet, in enhancing democratic processes within a democratic republic or representative democracy. It is a political development still in its infancy, as well as the subject of much debate and activity within government, civic-oriented groups and societies around the world (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-democracy).

XI. Human security

53. Human security means protecting vital freedoms. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations, building on their strengths and aspirations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood. Human security involves different types of freedoms: freedom from want; freedom from fear; and freedom to take action on one's own behalf. Such security can be obtained using two general strategies: protection and empowerment. Protection shields people from danger. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and

become full participants in decision-making. Protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing, and both are required in most situations.

54. Human security complements State security, furthers human development and enhances human rights. It complements State security by being people-centred and addressing insecurities that have not been considered as state security threats. By looking at "downside risks", it broadens the human development focus beyond "growth with equity". Respecting human rights are at the core of protecting human security" (see outline of the report of the Commission on Human Security, May 2003, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/Outlines/outline.pdf).

XII. Social capital

55. According to the World Bank, social capital refers to the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions that underpin a society, it is the glue that holds them together. Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue". The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. As has been observed, a society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding and shared values and behaviours that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible.

Human capital

56. As reported by Gary Becker, an expert in human capital at the University of Chicago, "To most people capital means a bank account, a hundred shares of IBM stock, assembly lines or steel plants in the Chicago area. These are all forms of capital in the sense that they are assets that yield income and other useful outputs over long periods of time. But these tangible forms of capital are not the only ones. Schooling, a computer training course, expenditures of medical care and lectures on the virtues of punctuality and honesty also are capital. That is because they raise earnings, improve health or add to a person's good habits over much of his lifetime. Therefore, economists regard expenditures on education, training, medical care and so on as investments in human capital. They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health or values in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets".

Notes

[1] Osborne, D. and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government*, Reading, Massachusetts, Addison-Wesley, 1993.

[2] Frederickson, H. G. and Kevin B. Smith, *The Public Administration Theory Primer*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 2003.

[3] United Nations Development Programme, Governance for sustainable human development, UNDP policy document, New York, 1997.

[4] World Bank, *Governance*, Washington, D.C., 1993.

[5] Pierre, Jon, *Debating Governance: Authority, Steering, and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

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Agenda item 6
Review of United Nations activities in the area of public administration

Review of United Nations activities in the area of public administration

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

According to the terms of reference of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/45, the Committee is responsible for the review of the work of the Secretariat in the area of public administration. The present report provides an overview of the activities implemented during the biennium 2004-2005. It also presents a scope of the activities planned for implementation in the biennium 2006-2007, including a special chapter on the organization of the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, which will be hosted at United Nations Headquarters during the second quarter of 2007. Finally, the report will include reference to the proposed strategic framework that will guide the planning of activities for the biennium 2008-2009.

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Activities carried out during the biennium 2004-2005	1–44	2
II.	Activities planned for the biennium 2006-2007	45–48	12
III.	Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government	49–54	15
IV.	Strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009	55	17

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I. Activities carried out during the biennium 2004-2005

A. Major publications

1. World Public Sector Report

1. The overarching message of the *2005 World Public Sector Report* is that, to meet the challenges facing public sector performance and public administrators everywhere, in both developed and less developed countries, there is a need for renewed focus on the management of human resources, the lifeblood of the public service, including the development of strong leadership capacities. A detailed presentation of the World Public Sector Report will be made to the Committee.

2. Decentralized Governance for Democracy, Peace, Development and Effective Service Delivery

2. This publication highlights a number of messages concerning decentralization: (a) with clear political will and effective management, decentralization can serve as an instrument of democratization, reconciliation and social integration, while at the same time promoting sustainable human development and good governance; (b) when civic engagement is built into the process of decentralization, the chances are good that resources will be mobilized and allocated to efforts aimed at poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; (c) the participation of local communities in the decision-making process at the regional and local levels is essential for the identification of local development priorities and goals; (d) women play a crucial role in making decentralization successful and decentralization represents an opportunity to strengthen women's participation in the governance process; (e) decentralization is instrumental in protecting and promoting cultural diversity, which, in turn, enriches participatory and pluralist democratic processes; (f) decentralization can improve service delivery, especially in the field of health and education, and therefore represents an important tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

3. Public Sector Transparency and Accountability in Selected Arab Countries: Policies and Practices

3. It can be argued that, to date, the Arab region has not benefited from globalization to the same degree as other regions. Since the public sectors in the region play a pivotal role in defining the development strategy of their countries, it is important that they reform their institutions to better align themselves with the new demands of a globally integrating and competitive economy. One reason for not fully engaging in the global economy may be due to a "governance gap" in enhancing the inclusiveness of society and demonstrating stronger public sector accountability, between the Arab region and other regions of the world. To begin addressing this gap in a practical way, this publication presents a regional analysis of the state of public sector transparency and accountability in selected countries.

4. Human Resource Recruitment and Best Talent Retention Tool Kit for Public Sector

4. Public sector service delivery is becoming more and more crucial for the socio-economic development of countries. In this respect, the issue of human

resources as the key factor for the revitalization of public administration should be properly addressed in order to improve service delivery. While the focus is, these days, primarily on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the excellence of public services to be delivered by any institution depends on how talented and competent its human resources are. The tool kit was prepared as a contribution to the quest for ways and means to effectively harness human resources for effective public sector performance.

5. Innovations in governance and public administration: replicating what works

5. This publication envisages a new agenda for innovation in governance and public administration that shifts the focus from failures and shortcomings to replicating what works in service delivery. The publication provides an introduction of concepts such as innovation and best practices by presenting several different definitions. More importantly, it sets out to examine the process of innovation while noting that intangible factors, such as the will of the stakeholders involved and leadership, are needed to follow this process through.

6. Compendium of best practices: innovations in the public sector

6. The innovations in the public sector presented in this publication are those that have been awarded United Nations Public Service awards in various categories.

7. United Nations Global E-government Readiness Reports 2004 and 2005

7. These publications measure the e-government development of different countries. The 2004 report comprises two parts: part one presents the United Nations Global E-readiness Survey and part two specifically addresses what constitutes disparity in access to information and communication technology. The 2005 report also consists of two parts: while part one focuses on the need to promote access for and include disadvantaged groups in society, part two states that the majority of the population of developing countries face grave challenges related to the new technological revolution. Whereas some developing countries have in place the right mix of reforms, institutions and programmes and will no doubt benefit from information and communication technologies, most are likely to be mired in a cycle of low income, poverty and growing disparity in access to modern technology.

8. Understanding knowledge societies

8. This report highlights a number of messages concerning the understanding of knowledge societies. It indicates that humanity is not so much entering the "age of knowledge" as the "age of responsibility": now that our world has learned how to mass produce and mass utilize knowledge, responsible policy choices are needed to steer us all towards a future in which knowledge is secured to support high levels of quality and safety of life for all people everywhere. The report also proposes an index of knowledge societies and makes recommendations for Governments, political and economic elites, business, civil society, new media and the academic community.

9. Measurement and Evaluation Tool for E-government Readiness Assessment

9. Measurement and Evaluation Tool for E-government Readiness (METER) provides a diagnostic tool to assist national Governments in the development of more relevant e-government strategies and action plans. This online tool was developed based on the results of tests conducted in nine countries in the Caribbean region. Further tests will be conducted in countries of other regions in the very near future.

10. Compendium — e-government innovative practices

10. Over 100 cases of e-government initiative practices from over 50 countries are presented in this compendium.

11. Enhancing public-private collaboration in public service delivery

11. The United Nations Programme in Public Administration supported the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) in its 19th General Assembly and Conference on the theme "Public Administration and Globalization: Challenges, Opportunities and Options", with its particular emphasis on enhancing public-private collaboration in public service delivery. This publication seeks to highlight the experiences of various States and institutions in bringing together state and market mechanisms to introduce new ways of producing and delivering public services that were traditionally delivered solely through state mechanisms.

12. Citizen participation and pro-poor budgeting

12. This May 2005 publication is a product of an ad hoc expert group meeting on civil participation in fiscal policy, held in March 2004. This publication provides guidance on the definition of civil society and participation in general and addresses the important issues of citizen/Government dialoguing on the subject of fiscal policies and its potential to influence budgeting to assist the poor. The essays, while highlighting the opportunities of citizen participation in budgeting, also mention several challenges associated with this concept. The report cautions that direct citizen/Government dialogue should by no means be seen as an alternative to the established democratic processes, nor should such a process be seen to be bypassing parliament or the local council but should explore options as to how best to complement the existing arrangements of public sector decision-making including budgeting.

13. Public enterprise and its management

13. A result of the findings of an expert group meeting on reinventing public enterprise and its management, this publication revisits the definition of public enterprise and closely examines its role in development in the globalizing and liberalizing world, particularly in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The publication addresses a number of issues, including the constitution of public enterprises, their role, definition, ownership trends and principal stakeholders, governance issues that impact on the success or failure of public enterprises and public enterprise management reform and its potential roles in promoting development. The publication seeks to emphasize the reforms that are important to ensure improved transparency, accountability and service delivery in

public enterprises. It also indicates the importance of developing public enterprise governance indicators to measure efficiency and effectiveness of public enterprises.

B. Ad hoc expert group meetings

14. These meetings are convened to bring together high-level experts not available in the United Nations.

15. The ad hoc expert group meeting on human resources for effective public services in a globalized world took place in Florence, Italy, and was organized in collaboration with the International Public Management Association for Human Resources. Its deliberations and conclusions were utilized as input for the *World Public Service Report*.

16. The meeting on decentralized governance for effective service delivery was held in Florence, Italy, in collaboration with the regional assembly of Tuscany. The deliberations and conclusions were compiled and synthesized in the publication entitled "Decentralized governance for democracy, peace, development and effective service delivery".

17. The meeting on methodologies for transfer of innovations in public administration was held in Tunis. Its deliberations and conclusions were compiled and synthesized into the publication entitled "Innovations in governance and public administration: replicating what works".

18. The meeting on e-governance and changes in administrative structures and processes was held in Seoul from 14 to 18 July 2004. The deliberations and conclusions were compiled and synthesized in a publication entitled "E-governance and changes in administrative structures and processes".

19. The meeting on knowledge management in public administration was held in Shanghai, China, on 31 May and 1 June 2005. The deliberations and conclusions were compiled and synthesized in the publication entitled "Understanding knowledge societies".

20. The meeting on civil society participation in fiscal policy gathered specialists who presented papers and discussed the institutions, processes and mechanisms of direct participation by citizens and citizen groups in the budgetary processes and how this participation might contribute to the implementation of pro-poor policies. A publication entitled "Citizen participation and pro-poor budgeting", one of the direct outcomes of this expert group meeting, was made available in May 2005.

21. An expert meeting on auditing for social change on the theme "Towards participatory and transparent governance", was held in the context of the sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government. Key experts were invited to discuss how the audit function, both external and internal, can be made more open and participatory, how audits can be used as tools for citizen empowerment for promoting transparency and accountability in the Government and how audits' contribution to government policymaking can be increased, through its relationship with planning and budgeting, in order to have a positive impact on peoples' socio-economic situations.

22. A meeting on reinventing public enterprise and its management provided a forum for select United Nations staff and experts in the field of public enterprise to

debate emerging issues of development management and public enterprise and its management. The role of public enterprises in the context of public administration and public finance reform, particularly in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, was highlighted by the experts. The management reform process includes reforms that apply the principles of transparency, accountability and "engaged governance" in the management of public enterprises and the role that public-private partnerships play in transforming the role of national and local governments in delivering effective public services.

C. Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government

23. Hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea with the support of the United Nations, the sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, on the theme "Towards participatory and transparent governance", took place in Seoul from 24 to 27 May 2005. Nearly 9,000 participants from 148 countries attended the conference, including heads of State, prime ministers, vice-presidents, ministers, governors and representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector. In addition to five plenary sessions and specialized side events, which enabled senior government officials to exchange their experiences in government reinvention with international colleagues, nine capacity development workshops offered intensive two-day training in alternative methods of making improvements in governance and public administration. Under the direction of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, these workshops were organized as part of a true partnership effort by entities from within the United Nations system, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in addition to 16 external and highly renowned organizations, such as Harvard University.

D. United Nations Public Service Awards 2005

24. The United Nations Public Service Awards were granted on United Nations Public Service Day, on 23 June 2005. The following were the winners of the Awards:

(a) Africa:

- Morocco: Category 2, Etablissement autonome de contrôle et de coordination des exportations, for "Decentralization and expansion of the quality monitoring process of fruits and vegetables for exportation"

(b) Asia and the Pacific:

- India: Category 1, Bhagidari Cell, Office of the Chief Minister, Government of NCT of Delhi for "Citizen-Government partnership: Bhagidari in New Delhi"
- Singapore: Category 3, Ministry of Trade and Industry, for "Online application system for integrated services"

(c) Europe and North America:

- Canada: Category 1, Vancouver Agreement, for "Innovative partnerships between Government agencies, and with community groups and business"
- Spain: Category 2, Public Employment Service of Castile and Leon, for "Modernization programme 2004"
- Canada: Category 3, Industry Canada, Office of Consumer Affairs, for "the Canadian Consumer Affairs Gateway"

(d) Latin America:

- Mexico: Category 2, Secretaría de Agua, Obra Pública e Infrastructura para el Desarrollo, for "El Programa Hidraulico Integral del Estado de Mexico"
- Mexico: Category 3, Secretaría de la Función Pública — Unidad de Gobierno Electrónico y Política de Tecnologías de la Información, for "La Estrategia de Gobierno Digital"

E. Developments in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council

25. The Economic and Social Council in July 2005 reviewed the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourth session and adopted resolution 2005/55. In the resolution, the Council, inter alia, encouraged countries to ratify, adopt and implement the relevant commitments and conventions in the areas of integrity, transparency and accountability, including those related to the prevention of corrupt policies and practices; requested the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to deepen its analysis of the relationships between State capacity, public administration and development by identifying, for the benefit of interested countries, successful examples, options and solutions in the area of public administration that have facilitated the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration; requested the Secretary-General to disseminate and promulgate in a more systematic and coherent way innovations and successful practices recognized by the United Nations Public Service Award; and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity and the reach of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance to serve as a vehicle for sharing knowledge, innovation and practices in public administration, in particular by associating more partner organizations from developing countries with the network.

26. The General Assembly, in November 2005, reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on public administration and development (A/60/114). In response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 59/55 and as a follow-up to the reports previously submitted by the Secretary-General in 2002, 2003 and 2004 (A/57/262-E/2002/82, A/58/152 and A/59/346), the report highlighted the development challenges facing Member States and, on the basis of the responses to a questionnaire submitted to the Member States, reviewed the measures adopted in the last 5 to 10 years to respond to those challenges through the revitalization of public administration systems. The report further considered the lessons learned by Member States in making the transition from externally influenced to home-grown and demand-driven public administration reforms. The

future of public administration, according to the report, lies in the institution of measures aimed not only at reaffirming the developmental role of public administration and upholding its core values, but also at reconfiguring public service organizations into open, participative, knowledge-sharing, innovating and results-oriented service-delivery systems. Among the tensions that are expected to arise in the study and practice of public administration in coming years are those between the demand for change and the need for institutional "tradition" (and "memory"); between managerial flexibility and the integrity of rules; between domestic concerns and supranational obligations; and between pressing, short-term problems and long-term, strategic issues. Above all, the report stressed the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in public administration, particularly with respect to collaborating with Member States and other partners in the implementation of capacity-building and knowledge-sharing initiatives in support of public administration reform.

27. The Assembly was also presented with the Seoul Declaration on Participatory and Transparent Governance, adopted on the occasion of the sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government. The General Assembly concluded its discussion of the item by adopting resolution 60/34, in which it, inter alia, stressed the valuable contribution that the Global Forum on Reinventing Government had made to the exchange of lessons learned in public administration reform; and emphasized the importance of the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, to be hosted by the United Nations in 2007, which will highlight the importance of public administration in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

F. Major meetings

28. The following major meetings were sponsored and organized by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management.

1. First Conference of the European and African Regional Assemblies

29. The First Conference of European and African Regional Assemblies was held in Florence, Italy, on 17 and 18 September 2004, to discuss the theme "Decentralization: the new dimension of peace, democracy and development". The Conference attracted more than 100 participants, including representatives of European and African regional and local assemblies, national ministers, governors, representatives of international organizations, international and national local government associations, non-governmental organizations, spiritual leaders, academicians and experts on decentralization.

2. International Conference on Engaging Communities

30. To further promote citizen and Government dialogue as a governance framework for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management supported the state government of Queensland, Australia, in organizing the first International Conference on Engaging Communities, held in Brisbane, Australia from 14 to 17 August 2005. More than 2,200 delegates from 50 countries participated in the conference, including ministers, senior government officials, parliamentarians,

mayors, other local government officials and representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and regional and international organizations. The conference provided an opportunity for participants to enhance and increase their awareness and knowledge of the concept of citizen and community engagement, particularly in the processes and practices of public institutions and their role in good governance. Participants were also able to gain further training in capacity-building strategies, new methodologies and tools in community engagement through the 18 major panels, 100 parallel sessions and eight United Nations sponsored workshops. A key outcome of the conference was the adoption of the Brisbane Declaration on Community Engagement, which embodies the principles of community engagement and clearly outlines the role of community engagement in fostering accountable governance in the public sector as well as the private sector.

G. Training workshops

31. As part of its technical cooperation programme, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management organized a number of training events for officials from developing countries. Some of the many workshops organized during the biennium are highlighted below.

32. A workshop on the theme "Decentralization: poverty reduction, empowerment and participation", held within the International Conference on Engaging Communities, highlighted the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) relating to decentralization, poverty reduction and human security. The workshop provided a platform for an exchange of experience on decentralization and poverty reduction from six countries: Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines. The workshop dealt with the factors constraining the potential of decentralized governance in poverty reduction, capacity-building concerns that need to be addressed for government agencies and for the empowerment of civil society and methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the processes and impact of decentralization on regions affected by conflict.

33. A workshop on citizen-Government dialoguing for pro-poor policies in evaluating public policies for poverty reduction, held in Nairobi, emphasized the various approaches in assessing the policy impact for poverty reduction, the specific contribution of civil society engagement and participation and alternative means and approaches to monitoring and evaluation at the country and subregional levels. The workshop provided an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of civil society participants in the analytical understanding of public policies for poverty reduction and resulted in more enhanced interaction between government and civil society participants in arriving at a consensual action programme.

34. A workshop on institutional strengthening of indigenous local governments, held in Quito, served as a consultative process involving mayors of local governments and was attended by 20 official indigenous representatives, including 10 from local governments and three provinces. A project proposal for capacity-building on issues of intercultural relations, the systematization of the indigenous model, training and human resource development, resource management for sustainability and public policies, information and participation, is under

consultation by the Government and donors. Another noteworthy outcome of this workshop was the agreement between 17 local governments with indigenous authority and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to formulate a programme of technical assistance for capacity-building and budgeting.

35. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the establishment and operation of the Subregional Network of Central America and the Caribbean for the Follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development, through its workshop on the subject. Established in 2000, the Network, comprising representatives from Governments and non-governmental institutions from eight countries in Central America and the Caribbean, has direct responsibilities at the national level in the coordination of the follow-up and implementation of agreed international policies, particularly in the social sectors. The Network's activities have included the exchange of information on social policies, programmes and projects; the sharing of best practices at the national level; horizontal cooperation; applied research; training and dissemination of standardized data and information among member countries; and the creation and maintenance of a web page.

36. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided support to the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) in organizing its 18th interregional seminar, on the theme "Application of information and communication technologies in the audit of e-government: a strategy for efficiency, transparency and accountability". The training seminar endeavoured to promote accountability and transparency among supreme audit institutions, specifically in the area of public expenditure and related activities, and to improve their respective Governments' role in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The training was well-attended, with over 60 delegates, consisting of members from the supreme audit institutions from developing and developed countries and countries with economies in transition.

37. Entities participating in a training workshop on the theme "Macroeconomic policies and poverty reduction in support of the Millennium Development Goals: sub-Saharan Africa" included the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP and academic institutions, including the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, and a sample of countries from sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of this training workshop was to improve the analysis, policymaking and service delivery for poverty reduction in support of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and national poverty reduction policies, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

38. A workshop on interregional information exchange on poverty-environment nexus initiatives in the Central Asian and South-East Asian regions provided a platform for informational exchange on initiatives undertaken in environmentally degraded regions covering five countries — in South-East Asia (Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) — on issues of the "poverty-environment nexus" from community development perspectives. Participants in this workshop undertook important steps to establish regional, subregional and interregional networks and promoted a better understanding of engaged governance and participatory practices.

39. The capacity-building workshop on public policies related to poverty reduction strategies and the Millennium Development Goals for French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa resulted in the training of 25 participants, including government policy managers and representatives of civil society organizations, on new approaches in formulating, monitoring and evaluating public policies related to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. The workshop provided an avenue for the discussion of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper analytical framework, civil society organizations' involvement in the policy formulation process and their participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers preparation, evaluation and revision. The workshop further highlighted the need to set up national and local frameworks to facilitate dialogue between government policy managers and representatives of civil society organizations and to establish networks on public policies related to poverty reduction.

40. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management, in partnership with EROPA, organized a training workshop on Community Engagement in Public Finance at Sub-national Governments, which looked at the various mechanisms and entry points for popular participation in local budgeting, social audits and revenue generation by local government units. Transparent, participatory, accountable and responsive budgets can result from citizen participation in budget formulation, analysis and review, expenditure tracking, audit and control. The experiences of India, Australia, Bangladesh and the Philippines in engaging the citizenry in the auditing of social projects undertaken by the government were also presented.

H. Major technical cooperation projects

41. A number of technical cooperation projects were executed by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, including projects on strengthening parliamentary information systems in Africa; the reform of the public service in Angola; public sector reform in Mozambique; leadership capacity-building in Africa; the exchange of innovations in governance and public administration in the Mediterranean region; assistance to the e-government development project in Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize and the e-government initiative in Morocco (electronic human resources management project in the public administration of Morocco).

I. Cooperation with other organizations

42. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management carried out many of its activities in cooperation with other international and regional public administration organizations. For example, it cooperated with IPMA-HR in the preparation of the *World Public Sector Report*; the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration in leadership capacity-building and standards of excellence in public administration and training; the African Association for Public Administration and Management in conferences on wealth creation and on partnerships in the public sector; UNCRD in the organization of the workshop on the theme of "Decentralization: poverty reduction, empowerment and participation"; EROPA in the organization and conceptualization of the workshop on the theme of "Community engagement in public finance at the sub-national

Governments"; and INTOSAI in the organization of the 17th and 18th Interregional Seminars on Government Auditing.

43. Finally, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank and the Development Gateway Foundation have established a partnership to harmonize efforts and improve overall effectiveness in support to countries in their use of information and communication technologies to strengthen democracy in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The tool to ensure the success of this partnership will be the E-Government Effectiveness Inter-Agency Task Force.

J. United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance

44. Thanks to the joint efforts made by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management and its 25 partners, the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) has further developed in the last two years and now offers more than 20,000 products and services and over 10,000 data entries in the area of public administration to its clients, namely governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and business communities and the general public. This information and these products and services include online training courses, analytical reports, best practices, calendar of events, country and case studies, country profiles, a legislation database, reports on major development and trends, manuals/tools/guidelines, conference papers and training materials, statistical databases/surveys, technical project highlights and serials. With the further development of the Information Technology systems, the UNPAN portal has tremendously improved its facilities to provide easy access to information and interactive communication with its clients worldwide. It receives an average of approximately 3 million views per month. It has become the only highly recognized global portal in public administration in existence.

II. Activities planned for the biennium 2006-2007

A. Activities approved for 2006-2007

45. The following activities in public administration are contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 submitted by the Secretary-General under Section 9, Economic and social affairs, Subprogramme 8, Public administration, finance and development (A/60/6 (Sect. 9), para 9.86):

Outputs

During the biennium, the following final outputs will be delivered:

(a) Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget):

(i) General Assembly:

a. Substantive servicing of meetings: General Assembly (8); panels as required by the Assembly on emerging issues in the public sector (2);

b. Parliamentary documentation: Report mandated by resolution of the fifty-seventh General Assembly on public administration and development (through the Economic and Social Council) (2);

(ii) Economic and Social Council:

a. Substantive servicing of meetings: Economic and Social Council (6); panels as required by the Council on basic data and trends in the public sector (2);

b. Parliamentary documentation: report on the fifth meeting of the Committee of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (1); report on the sixth meeting of the Committee of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (1);

(iii) Committee of Experts on Public Administration:

a. Substantive servicing of meetings: fifth meeting of the Committee of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (also provision of technical servicing) (14); sixth meeting of the Committee of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (also provision of technical servicing) (14);

b. Parliamentary documentation: comprehensive report on basic data and trends in the public sector (1); report on the programme in public administration, finance and development (2); analytical/working papers on selected issues (10);

(iv) Ad hoc expert groups meetings on: e-government and the access divide (2006) (1); knowledge economy versus knowledge society (2007) (1); bottom-up approach for developing foundations and principles of public administration (1); building the capacity of the public service for the achievement of the Millennium Goals (1); civil society partnerships and domestic resource mobilization (1); role of central planning offices in addressing poverty reduction challenges (1);

(b) Other substantive activities (regular budget):

(i) Recurrent publications: compendium of best practices and innovation in e-governance (1); compendium of best practices and innovation in the public administration (1); country profiles of public administration (1); e-government readiness survey (2); United Nations Public Service Award report (1); *World Public Sector Report* (1);

(ii) Non-recurrent publications: building the capacity of the public service for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (1); civil society partnerships and domestic resource mobilization (1); e-government and access divide (2006) (1); guidelines on comprehensive assessment of and planning for reforming and

strengthening governance and public administration capacity in developing countries (1); knowledge economy versus knowledge society (2007) (1); public administration and the United Nations: a historic perspective (1); role of central planning offices in addressing poverty reduction challenges (1);

(iii) Special events: five regional ministerial meetings on emerging trends in the public sector (in cooperation with the regional commissions) (5); public service awards competition (2); support for the observance of the Public Sector Day (2);

(iv) Technical material: *Development Administration Newsletter* (4); maintenance and improvement of the website on the administration and cost of elections (1); maintenance and update of data on public sector ethics and inventory of African governance programme (1); maintenance and update of database on conflict management organizations, programmes and practitioners (1); maintenance and update of database on public sector indicators and measurements (1); maintenance and update of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) (1); technical paper on public sector effectiveness in social development (1); working/discussion papers on specialized issues (10);

(v) Audio-visual resources: training materials on CD-ROM (4);

(vi) Substantive servicing of inter-agency meetings: substantive support to the Global Forum on Reinventing Government (1); support to regional technical meetings organized by partner institutions (5);

(c) Technical cooperation (regular budget/extrabudgetary):

(i) Advisory services: approximately 16 training seminars, workshops and policy dialogues at the request of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the areas of public policy and public economics, public administration finance and socio-economic governance, with particular emphasis on initiatives fostering South-South cooperation and innovation in public administration; approximately 60 needs-assessment and diagnostic missions related to the substantive expertise of the subprogramme in the areas of public administration, and finance and socio-economic governance; approximately 8 guidelines, manuals and training materials for application to the public sector resulting from requests for training assistance from developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(ii) Field projects: approximately 80 field projects (some in partnership with UNDP and other operational entities) aimed at strengthening the institutional and management capacity of interested developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the areas of public administration and finance and of socio-economic governance.

46. At the time of writing the present report, full details of the timing, final subject, etc. have not yet been finalized. Those details will be presented orally to the members of the Committee during the meeting.

B. Review of existing mandates

47. Further to the submission of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, in response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Secretary-General has requested all departments to review existing mandates and activities and see how these activities contribute to the implementation of the Outcome. Consequently, a number of exercises were carried out, including:

- Prioritization of existing mandates and outputs (high, medium, low priorities)
- Joint review of programmes by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
- Development of indicators of achievement for the United Nations development agenda comprising global conferences, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit

The main goal of the exercise was to refocus the work of the United Nations and, consequently, that of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management in key priority areas, thus aligning all Divisional activities with the 2005 World Summit conclusions, which reiterated, inter alia, the importance of good governance and sound public institutions in the implementation of the global development agenda. The exercise carried by the Division and the members of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs has identified the following priority areas in governance and public administration emerging from the Summit:

- Post-conflict reconstruction of governance and public administration
- Human resources development
- Integrity, accountability and ethics in the public sector
- Role of information and communication technologies and e-government to support development
- Governance tools for implementation of the development agenda
- Participatory governance and partnerships
- Development of governance indicators to assess progress in the implementation of the agenda
- Innovation in governance and public administration
- Managing and sharing of knowledge and best practices

48. The above-mentioned priority areas will guide the process of fine-tuning the content of the activities planned for the biennium 2006-2007.

III. Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government

49. One of the main activities to be implemented during the biennium 2006-2007 is the holding of the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, which the United Nations will host on the subject "Governance for a better life for all: building trust, partnerships and capacity".

50. Previous forums have been hosted by the United States of America (1999), Brazil (2000), Italy (2001), Morocco (2002), Mexico (2003) and the Republic of Korea (2005). In its resolution 57/277, the General Assembly asked the Secretariat to provide support to the Global Forum on Reinventing Government. In May 2005, during the sixth Global Forum in Seoul, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs extended the invitation to host the seventh Global Forum. The participants endorsed the recommendation of the Government of the Republic of Korea to accept the kind invitation of the United Nations. In its resolution 60/34 the General Assembly emphasized the importance of the seventh Global Forum, which will be hosted by the United Nations.

51. Governance and public administration capacity-building has a critical role in the achievement of the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals. The 2005 World Summit Outcome emphasized the centrality of governance capacity-building in a wide range of contexts, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, economic growth and development, sustainable development, access to services, employment, health, education, gender equality, the protection of vulnerable groups, social integration, countries with special needs, resource management, technology, security and the global partnership for development. If the international community wants to promote development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as indeed it does, then it must take concrete actions to improve governance and public administration at all levels: international, regional, national, provincial and local. If the public sector does not have sufficient capacity to effectively implement policy, then the best of intentions and commitments will fall short. Governance — including public administration and civil service, rule of law, human rights, macroeconomic policies and regulatory frameworks and transparent and participatory decision-making processes — is a necessary condition for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In view of this, the Millennium Project's report to the Secretary-General has made a strong case for investing in governance, including public administration.

52. In the second quarter of 2007, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will organize the seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government to provide an opportunity for senior government officials, representatives of the private sector, civil society and international organizations to establish a constructive partnership between the key actors in governance. Over the first two days of the event, plenary sessions organized by the United Nations will help to orient participants on key themes in government reinvention. The Institutional Partners Group will organize capacity development workshops to take place over the following two days on the revitalization of governance and public administration to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As part of a system-wide partnership, Group members include the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UN-Habitat and UNICEF, in addition to external organizations, such as the World Bank, Transparency International, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Institute of Administrative Sciences, Harvard University, the

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the Worldwide Alliance for Citizen Participation. The Governments of Austria, France, Italy and the Republic of Korea, other bilateral donors and UNDP will provide financial support for the Global Forum through a multi-donor trust fund.

53. Under the overarching theme "Governance for a better life for all: building trust, partnerships and capacity", the plenary sessions and five to seven parallel capacity development workshops to be organized for the seventh Global Forum will focus on a number of sub-topics.

54. The members of the Committee of Experts in Public Administration will be provided with proposed themes during the session and will be requested to offer suggestions and advice in this respect.

IV. Strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009

55. According to the guidelines relating to the United Nations programme budget process, governed by General Assembly resolution 41/213, the Secretary-General, the year before preparing the biennial budget proposals, submits to the General Assembly, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a strategic framework for each programme and subprogramme. Once approved by the General Assembly, the framework will constitute the basis for the preparation of the next biennial budget proposals. During 2006, the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly the strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009. The framework will be programmed in the second quarter of 2006. In order to elicit the views and suggestions of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, a preliminary draft of the strategic framework for subprogramme 8 will be submitted for the Committee's review as a conference room paper during its fifth session.